

FUTURE OF ROADS IS NOW ASSURED

Present Widespread Interest in Work Makes Success a Certainty.

A PAYING INVESTMENT

Poorer Localities Should Be Glad to Assist in Work of Making Highways.

The present widespread interest throughout the State in the subject of good roads is gratifying and presages well for the future.

The advance so far made in Virginia on this subject has been based on the admittedly just and wise policy of the co-operation of the people of the whole State in the form of local co-operation, stimulated and assisted by State cooperation in the shape of State money and convict labor aid.

To the credit of the people of our cities and their representation in the State Legislature, he it said, no opposition to this has come from them. They have shown themselves capable of taking a broad and far-sighted view of the subject in the light of the fact that they will be benefited but indirectly and after the immediate benefits have come to the country communities at the same time they have had business acumen sufficient to perceive that such benefits are certain as a result of being only a matter of time to await their incoming. They have been willing, therefore, to aid the local communities in bearing the burden of making the necessary improvement in good roads to insure the eventual return thereon in the shape of enhanced prosperity to the State as a whole. The richer counties of the State have so far united with the cities in pursuing this wise and beneficial policy. Surely, therefore, it would seem that the poorer local communities of the State would welcome and gladly make use of the assistance thus afforded them to make an investment that will be certain in its income of enhanced prosperity, and which income these local communities will be the first to receive and enjoy. But, strange to say, what opposition there has been heretofore has practically come from these very communities.

Daunted by Immensity.
It is the immensity of the undertaking that daunts them. They are not ungrateful for the assistance offered, and, albeit, with much questioning as to any practical progress to be made, a large per cent. of the counties of the State have decided to avail themselves of the State convict labor and money aid now offered towards the building of good roads. Many of the people of our counties feel, however, while they do not question the value of good roads, that they are too expensive for the assistance offered, and the investment in them. They regard them as among the luxuries of the rich. Condemned so long to poverty and privation, they are not accustomed to having become so accustomed to the "mud tax" along with other privations, they have a hopeless feeling that there is no relief for them within their reach.

Now, those who know our people will understand that it is no small obstacle that would engender such a feeling. And it is an immense obstacle to be removed—not to be removed by many local communities without aid.

This has been demonstrated by experience of many years in many States and in the United States. It has been found, in truth, (so immense is the obstacle) that the utmost output of local effort with the assistance of the utmost effort of State aid, is not sufficient to accomplish the task perfectly. There is yet further need of assistance in this stupendous task, namely, the aid of the people of the whole nation in making the necessary investment in the shape of enhanced national prosperity.

But although this ideal may be afar off in its consummation, this should not nerve us to greater endeavor. In any substantial progress can be made toward that consummation, however distant, and one acquainted with the genius of the people of Virginia can be confident that they have only to realize that such progress can be made to determine them to make the effort.

Convincing Effect.
Now, it is believed that the practical trial of the wholehearted aid, small as it is, afforded by the present statutes in Virginia, will have this convincing effect. Our people of each community will thus find that the undertaking which not only seemed to them, but was indeed hopeless, unaided, is quite a different undertaking with the co-operation of the people of this great State aiding them towards its accomplishment.

The correction of some misconceptions in the popular mind to the effect that State aid is only given to "macadamized" roads will be salutary. Some, of course, of the right kind, in the best material for road construction, and when available should be used, and for fortunate are those localities where such material can be obtained economically. But other sections need not despair of substantial progress in the building of good roads, and the sand and clay mixture have been demonstrated to be good material, when properly used, and in different sections of the State can be used. Our excellent State Highway Commissioner's office has already a fine and complete system of road building and is continually gathering more and more all at the service of all the people of the whole State.

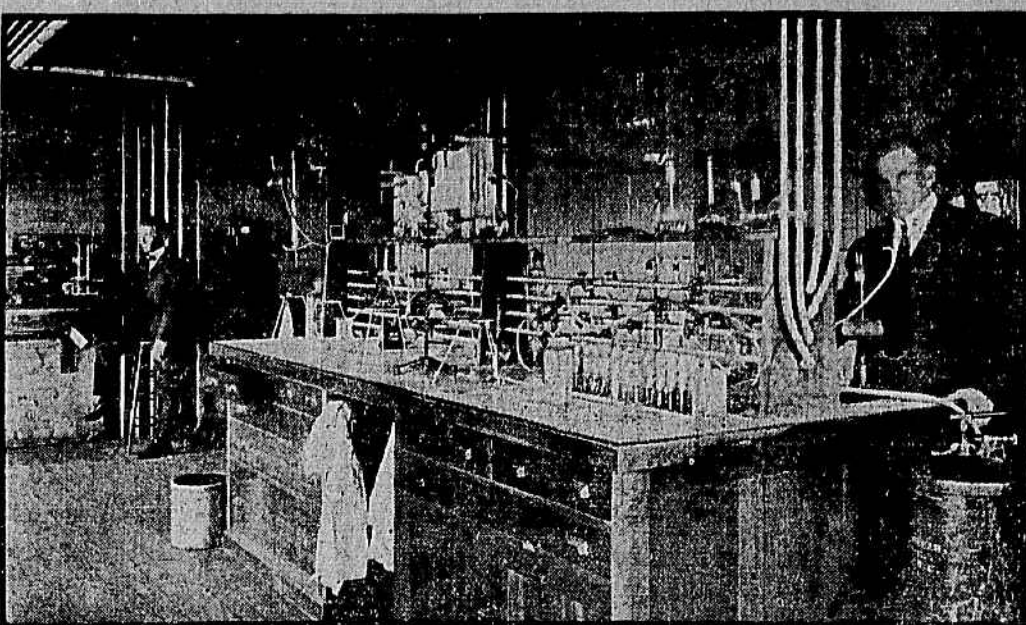
As to what roads should be improved—trunk lines throughout the State or lateral roads to railroad stations, or roads to connect one place with another, controversy has arisen. The present statutes are sufficient law on this subject. In some portions of the State, the class of roads and in other portions of the State, a different class of roads should be improved. Our present law governing the determination as to the matter can be amended and amended to enable each community represented by its local road authority, and the State Highway Commissioner, to make such decision.

Can Save Thousands.
Again, with the construction of "good roads" with State convict labor aid, our State Highway Commissioner is now directed by law to give to all local road authorities valuable information as to location, drainage and repair of our earth roads, which would actually save the local communities thousands of dollars. And in view of the fact that it must be years before any great part of our roads can be at all permanently improved, this matter of the judicious

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Where the Government Solves Good Roads Problems

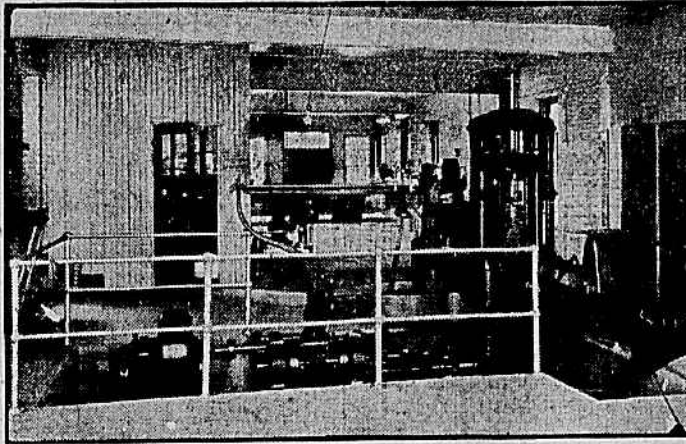


Chemical Laboratory in the United States Office of Public Roads. Dr. Albert S. Cushman on the right.

expenditure of the money that must be spent in mere repairs work on our roads as they are of very great importance and should not be overlooked, and our State Highway Commissioner should bring into closer touch with our local communities and be more turned to and used by them in connection with such work.

On all the whole subject of roads it is of the utmost importance that our people should organize, should stimulate and keep alive interest in the most important subject, make use of the laws and means now available, crystallize and make known to the legislative representatives their wishes and the practical difficulties encountered from time to time, so as more and more effectively to bring them to the attention of the State and the Federal Government, and eventually national, in the greatest single effort they can make for the future welfare of our beloved State.

FREDERICK WILMER SIMS, Louisville, Va.



View of Testing Laboratory United States Office of Public Roads.

Improve the Land and Grow Larger Corn Crops

By GEORGE W. KOINER
Commissioner of Agriculture and Immigration

The article from the Department of Agriculture which appeared in The Times-Dispatch of Sunday, March 11, emphasized several ways by which the corn crop could be increased in Virginia. It is our purpose in this communication to discuss the subject in a broader sense and suggest some safe lines along which the crop can continue to occupy a front place in the agriculture of the State. The increase in the acreage in corn in Virginia in 1908 was \$4,000 acres more than in 1907. The acreage in 1906 and 1908 was nearly the same, but the yield in 1908 was 13,000,000 bushels more than in 1906 and at the present market price of corn, gives \$10,000,000 value on the increased yield from the same number of acres of the Virginia corn crop. This shows how well better farming pays. The increase in average last year over the previous year shows also that our farmers are not only doing better farming, but are also doing more of it. Last year the acreage in wheat was increased 125,000 acres over 1907. Our farmers are

will save this waste and loss. If, then, an account is kept with the soil by the farmer, crediting the land with what is removed of the plant food and charging it with what is given back, farming processes would be reduced to maintaining proper soil conditions and having his books show what had been done to destroy and build up.

Too Often Soil Robbers. Every farmer should try to make a yearly improvement in his practice, for with-out improvement in methods there will be no increase of profits. Let the soil be made a little bit better each year and the corresponding increase in the yield of crops will compensate three or four times the outlay.

On the other hand, if there is a constant decrease in the fertility of the soil, the inability of the farmer to improve his soil by reason of the decreased yields in his crops will keep him on the downward path. Study the soil; keep it in good heart by rotation, tilling, and manuring; and success is inevitable. These are the keys with

the farmer to manure, to thoroughly prepare, plow and cultivate, is in the reach of every farmer independent of his means, but where labor is used this is the only line of farming that pays.

For each corn crop there should be an ample supply of plant food provided either in manure or fertilizer, or what is better, preceded by two farmers put out a large boundary in corn for the reason that it is necessary because the land is poor and he will have to crop a large area in order to supply his needs. This process of reasoning is faulty and leads to loss and unprofitable farming. To cultivate so much land means the keeping of necessary horses for the purpose, the keeping of these horses the year round to work four or five months, and also the board and wages for labor become an expensive item.

The Plowing and Cultivation of Poor Soil is as expensive as the plowing and cultivation of fertile soil. The man who cultivates poor soil and harvests poor crops cannot profitably compete with his neighbor who grows good crops with little, if any, greater expenditure of labor or expense. Corn growing should not be attempted on poor land until it is brought into a fertile condition by growing and plowing under one or two leguminous crops at the beginning and the application of all the manure that can be made and saved. In the meantime, some crops that require less fertility can be grown. It should be remembered that the nature of the corn plant is such that it will not produce grain unless the soil is rich enough to afford a considerable growth of stalks and the best yield of ears is not obtained unless the stalks have made a maximum growth. For this reason some other plants will produce small or fair crops on soil too poor to produce corn. Many forage and grain crops will produce a good yield in proportion to the fertility of the soil.

This is not true, however, of corn. When poor soil drafts grass to half its normal size the crop of hay is reduced about one-half, but when poor soil drafts corn to half its normal size there will be no grain yield, or if any ears at all are produced they will be small and inferior. Even in the best corn-producing States there is some land so poor that farmers do not attempt to grow corn on it. Such land, however, can, in a few years' time, be made to produce good corn crops. The growers who are the quickest to learn the fertility of a plot of land are those whose farms contain some poor upland fields and some fertile bottom land. They find it necessary to fertilize the poor fields or confine corn-growing to the bottoms.

Now, what fertilizer must I use or what means shall I employ to provide the necessary plant food for the corn crop is a question the farmers are asking often than any other. Large applications of fertilizer for poor land are not profitable, and are a very expensive method of improving land for the reason that the soil is in no condition to utilize it and there must be some waste of material. Men with plenty of means, who are willing to shut their eyes to cost and expense, can hurry the process by heavy applications of fertilizer, but farmers with limited means must have some returns for every cent expended, and cannot afford to be so wasteful. They must use fertilizer with cowpats as a preparatory crop.

The Proper Fertilizer. We are now speaking of poor land which is being made ready for corn.

This kind of land cannot appropriate a heavy application of fertilizer any more than a weak stomach can digest a heavy meal. There must be decaying vegetable matter and bacterial life in the soil for it to act on and in conjunction with the fertilizer, so as to secure the full benefit of the application.

Hence it is we can use more profitably large quantities of fertilizer on rich land than on that which is poor in humus. While it is true that in proportion to the whole mass of soil such a small per cent. is plant food or takes part in the active support of the crop, yet the supply is ample if it can be made available. Nature in her wisdom takes account of the processes of agriculture, and when greediness and wasteful farming are practiced the richness of the soil is killed; that is to say, when the farmer undertakes to take off all and return nothing nature's laws step in. When we pause to think, how wise this is? If it were not so even in their struggle for gain would destroy the soil and thereby leave nothing for the next generation. As it is, if we farm the land right it will give to us abundantly; if we farm poorly, we will receive sparingly. If we farm greedily, we will receive nothing at all.

Returning to the subject of humus and vegetable matter, and when this point of improving the soil is reached, we have grasped the true principles of soil fertility, and have as a matter of fact established a fertilizer factory in the soil. The decay of vegetable matter introduces into the soil organic life. The presence of this organism causes the elements to become soluble and ready to be taken up by the plant. A soil without vegetable matter is a dead soil.

Rotation of Crops. Let us note briefly the rotation of crops, which offers the only true principle of maintaining fertility, and the only system of farming we can follow successfully in growing corn. The fields ought to be laid off so as to have corn fall in rotation every fourth year. It is true that many have the rotation shorter than this and plant every third year some heavy crop, such as clover, alfalfa, or timothy. The result is that the humus is soon cropped out of the soil. Then nature takes a hand, and with the key of prudence locks the door to progress further.

While many good rotations might be suggested, yet all would have to be arranged to suit local conditions. Assuming that corn is the leading crop, we would plant as early as practicable an early maturing variety of cowpeas, and use a good grade of fertilizer composed of phosphoric acid and potash, depending upon the peas to gather the nitrogen from the atmosphere. Plow these peas under to supply humus-making material, and seed the land in crimson clover, which ought to be put in not later than August 15, so as to give the plant time to get a good start for winter. When spring arrives this should be turned under on some one-half acre of land, the acre applied at once and harrow the line thoroughly into the soil. Plant the corn, and several hundred pounds of finely ground bone meal could be used to good advantage, but do not apply the fertilizer until the time has had time to be taken up by the soil, say three weeks later. At the last plowing of the corn, sow crimson clover again, and during the winter let the cows graze until the middle of April. The stock can be taken off and a good crop of hay can be mown by June 1, or possibly a little sooner, depending on the locality and season. The clover soil should be plowed, and a early and valiant and let the land settle and become compact. After a thorough shallow cultivation, sow a mixture of timothy or red top and clover for the usual hay crop, or any other grass seed may be best adapted to that soil. To keep the land productive and retain the fertility of the soil, sow two leguminous crops to each acre or corn crop, and the land will gradually improve and produce good crops requiring very little, if any, fertilizer.

The corn crop should be grown at intervals of four or five years on the same land, and should be preceded by such nitrogen-gathering crops as clover or peas. Numerous experiments have proven that the cow peas, under average conditions, will gather and add 75 pounds of nitrogen to the acre; and practically restore to the soil the amount of plant food cropped out by a fifty bushel yield per acre, and with crimson clover adding as much nitrogen and often more than the peas. It will be seen that corn can be profitably grown and the plant food used by the crop can be returned to the soil by the use of cow peas and crimson clover, and at the same time use these valuable crops as feed (hay) for the farm animals.

Land Dies of Neglect. There are many thousands of acres of corn land each year in the State that are thrown out after the corn crop has been gathered, that is, the land is left bare the following year. The hot sun evaporates the nitrogen from the bare ground and the rains wash it away. The damage to the land from neglect in a year is equal to the exhaustion by the corn crop, often worse. Whenever land is left bare of any vegetation it is losing some plant food aside from the injury by the sun and the washing away of the fertilizer. To prevent this condition will cost but little money and labor. When the corn crop is plowed the last time sow fifteen pounds of crimson clover to the acre, and when the corn is gathered the clover is plowed. The growing crop will shade the ground during the hot days in July and August, and a good stand of clover is usually secured at a cost of 75 cents per acre for the seed.

A good crop of crimson clover will easily put \$5 to \$10 worth of plant food to the acre in the land. The land will be protected the next year from the baking sun and the humus from the roots of the clover will prevent the land washing into gullies. All this for the small cost of 75 cents per acre for the clover seed. No farmer can afford to neglect his corn ground by allowing it to lie bare the following year. He cannot afford to save 75 cents and lose from \$5 to \$10 an acre.

Our Virginia lands need humus, life-giving vegetable matter, more than anything else to improve them. Humus is the host of the various bacteria in the soil, where they live and do their work to help the soil to grow more crops. Stable manure does this, but clover usually does it better. At all the clovers and cow peas and other nitrogen-gathering plants, which do the same thing, can be grown cheaply in Virginia and will improve any land. It has been truthfully said that any farmer who "persists in growing them will have prosperity forced on him."

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WHITENS PRO-PHY-TOL REFRESHES THE MOUTH

FAUQUIER COUNTY FOR GOOD ROADS

Citizens Are Wide Awake to Importance of Movement.

BOND ISSUE IS PROPOSED

Suggestion Meets With Approval from Majority of the Property Owners.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.] WARRENTON, VA., April 21.—At the present time in Fauquier County, if one should drive up in front of a country store and see three or more farmers sitting on dry goods boxes talking very earnestly and expressing themselves in strong terms, it would be needless to ask the subject under discussion, for where two or more farmers get together the subject of "good roads" is the principal topic.

The question of bonding the county for about \$20,000 is being freely discussed and very favorably received by a majority of those who really understand what such a plan means. Some think, when this subject is first mentioned, that it is intended to macadamize all roads in the county; but this would be impossible without bonding the county for an amount too large to suggest, much less carry into effect. It is the plan and intention of those who are advocating macadam roads to macadamize all the principal roads throughout the county and bed up the dirt roads leading into the main roads, and if this is done very few farmers will have over three miles of dirt road to travel before reaching the macadam road. The best and most feasible way to bond the county is for each magisterial district to vote on the plan, and the amount for which bonds shall be issued, which sum so obtained should be spent in that district.

Before the Legislature passed the bill providing for what is commonly called the State aid bill, Fauquier had started to raise funds by private subscription for building a macadam road from The Plains to Middleburg, a distance of eight miles. E. H. Harriman, the great railroad magnate and manipulator, has a hunt club located at The Plains, and helped the matter along by contributing \$5,000, which amount made a good-sized next-egg. This road is now over half completed and will be entirely finished by the middle of July.

Movement Is Growing. A movement is now on foot and is being vigorously pushed to raise funds by private subscription to macadamize the road from Warrenton to Bethel, a distance of four miles. This movement is meeting with much success, and although it has only been agitated a short time, sufficient funds have been raised to build more than two miles of this road. As Fauquier county has a force of 400 slaves working on the road from The Plains and Middleburg Road, and kept them after March 1, it could not get any of the cash appropriation for 1908, and it is now proposed to have this convict force move to Warrenton to work on the Bethel Road.

The people of Fauquier have very kind feelings for Mr. Wilson, the highway commissioner, and appreciate what he has done for them, and if they can help him in his work, they will do so. The people who have been working on the road to Bethel are macadamized.

The Legislature has made it possible for every county in Virginia to have a good road, and the people of Fauquier are alive to the situation and are going to keep pegging away until their supply of rock, which they have been cultivating with plows, is all used up on their roads.

What It Means. The advantage of good roads is so numerous it is useless to enumerate them. One of the greatest factors in the wonderful development of the valley has been its good roads. It would be almost impossible to state correctly how much per acre a macadam road would increase the value of land, but \$10 per acre is a fair estimate for the increase to the value of land bordering on a macadam road, from which amount the cost of the road should be deducted. As you go away from the road on either side. Think for a moment how much the value of your land would be increased. Mr. Farmer, and give an honest opinion as to whether you can afford to keep on paying the bills into the same old mud hole every year. Think again of how much easier you can haul your grain to market, and above all the comfort of driving over a good road and how much you will save in wages and horse hire. Think again, would it not be better to have roads that are good all winter for your children to use going to school, than to have them trudge along in the mud and across fields. The question of good roads is now with the people, so let the good work be continued with renewed effort.

J. D. R.

SEVEN MILES OF PERMANENT ROAD

Committee Is Now Securing Subscriptions to Defray Cost of Work.

There is at present on foot an excellent movement in this section which will undoubtedly result in the building of at least seven miles of first-class macadamized road, sixteen feet wide, and of the highest quality. A committee has been at work for several weeks procuring private subscriptions and rights of way—where necessary to cross the road. The road is proposed to build this road from the corporate limits of Roanoke City, Va., about half of this road has been in use for many years, about half will take a new route—giving a splendid grade, as good as any in the State. The Norfolk and Western railroad, which this parallels for several miles. Something over \$7,000 has been already raised by private subscription, so the aid secured from the State, and the work to be done by the State, will be undoubtedly build the seven miles contemplated. No heavy grade on any part of the line, excellent limestone in abundance, excellent all along the road, rights of way have been given, and altogether the project is in excellent shape.

Contribute Liberally. The citizens of this county are contributing liberally to this fund, and naturally so, as it gives to them what they have needed for many years, viz., a suitable road into Roanoke City.

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Their present road is along the edge of Read's Mountain—a crooked, steep road, very badly located and very difficult to keep in order on account of the steep grades. The new route practically cuts out all bad grades, and, furthermore, it connects at Cloverdale with the old macadamized road built many years ago from Buchanan to Seven-Mile Ford, near Bristol, and at present one of the best roads in the State, in spite of the fact that it has been abused and has not been kept in repair.

In the work that the members of this committee have done on this road proposition they have met with no opposition whatsoever. They have met with very little discouragement, and on every hand the best people the county has are working for it. The committee is now at work on the plan suggested by Mr. Lassiter, and the best advertisement for a good road is a good road, and it is their hope and confident expectation that as soon as the road now planned becomes a fact, the road question in this section will settle itself.

JOS. A. TURNER, Roanoke, Va.

Ballsville Social News.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.] BALLSVILLE, VA., April 21.—Mrs. A. J. Johnson spent Saturday in Richmond. Mrs. P. M. Tyler has returned to her home in Henric. Mrs. J. D. Dupuy is spending the week-end with relatives in Richmond. Mrs. Thomas Crowder and daughter, Mrs. Matthew Sieger, are the guests of Mrs. A. W. Wilson. E. W. Harrison spent Monday and Tuesday in Farmville. Mrs. Paul Lipscomb was in Richmond last week. Master Colbert Tyler, who has been quite sick with fever, is greatly improved.

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